

**Guadalupe, San Antonio, Mission, and Aransas Rivers and Mission,  
Copano, Aransas, and San Antonio Bays Basin and Bay Area Stakeholder  
Committee (GSA BBASC) Meeting**

Thursday, April 6, 2017; 10:00 a.m.  
GBRA River Annex, Seguin, TX

**Meeting Minutes**

**Members Present**

Suzanne Scott, Chair; Dianne Wassenich, Vice-Chair; Julia Carrillo for Roland Ruiz; Josh Gray for Jay Gray; James Dodson for Ken Dunton; Annie Kellough for Jennifer Ellis; Mike Mecke; James Lee Murphy; Adam Conner for Robert Puente; Doris Cooksey; Micah Voulgaris for Milan Michalec; David Mauk; Jace Tunnell; Steve Raabe for Con Mims; Tommy Hill, Garrett Engelking; Chris Hale; Kate Garcia; Jennifer Ellis and Ken Dunton via teleconference.

**Public Comment**

No public comments were made at this time.

**Discussion and Agreement on Agenda**

The Agenda includes a vote on selection of nominees for stakeholder positions and officers, a discussion regarding meeting rules, and updates on two ongoing studies. Members were in agreement to proceed forward with the agenda as drafted.

**Approval of Meeting Minutes**

The minutes from the September 27, 2016 meeting were approved by consensus.

**Selection of Nominees to Fill Vacant Stakeholder Positions**

The GSA BBASC filled vacancies for the following stakeholder interest groups: agriculture irrigation, free-range livestock, recreational water users, industry refining, and public interest groups. Nominees Jim Bower, Terry Dudley, Colin McDonald, Scott Courtney, and Charlie Flatten, respectively, were voted to fill the vacancies. The new members joined the BBASC and participated as members for the remainder of the meeting.

**Selection of Officers: Chair and Vice-Chair**

Chair Suzanne Scott stated that she and Vice-Chair Dianne Wassenich have served on the GSA BBASC as officers since the group began. Chair Scott asked whether members had suggestions for Chair and Vice-Chair nominees. Members nominated Suzanne Scott as Chair and Dianne Wassenich as Vice-Chair. Both were voted to continue serving in the same positions as Chair and Vice-Chair.

**Discussion and Appropriate Action**

Chair Scott indicated that the BBASC meeting rules were last revised in 2010 and asked the group to suggest possible updates. The quorum requirement (Rule #6) was

considered for revision. The current rule makes it difficult to ensure adequate attendance for quorum at all meetings. Currently, 2/3 of members and alternates must be in attendance at a meeting to meet quorum. Chair Scott suggested that the quorum be revised to 51% of the group in attendance. The group voted affirmatively on this change.

Chair Scott said that the group should discuss whether email or phone participation is acceptable for a vote. Members voted to allow teleconferencing as an option to attend meetings, if available at the meeting location. If a conference line has a limit, the members have precedence over public attendees. If conference call is available at the meeting location, the call-in information will be included in the meeting notice. Member Jace Tunnell asked whether the group would consider an email vote for simple decision items. Members agreed that email decisions may be allowed only on items that have a short-term deadline from an outside entity, such as the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB), that does not coincide with an in-person meeting. An email vote would follow a conference call discussion, so that members are provided adequate information to make an informed vote by email.

Vice-Chair Wassenich mentioned that the consensus decision-making process was used in the development of the rules. The BBASC rules require 75% of full membership for some votes, such as removal of members and amendment of the rules (Rule #11). This requirement makes it difficult to ensure enough members attend future meetings to vote on these items. Alternates are included in the voting if they are attending the meeting for a member. Member Jennifer Ellis mentioned the one exception to alternates voting is for the election of BBEST members. Member Doris Cooksey stated that 75% of the group should be in attendance for a vote on significant items due to the importance of these decisions. Members voted to amend the attendance requirement for voting on significant items to an affirmative vote from 2/3 of the full membership, including alternates. Members also voted that a routine item would require 51% of members in attendance at a meeting (with quorum) to vote affirmatively. Chair Scott suggested that the group decide to rank decisions as significant or routine decisions by magnitude of importance. The significant items included removal of BBASC members, recommendations regarding standards, studies, or work plans, rule revisions, and appointment of BBEST members. The routine items included voting on new BBASC members and approving meeting minutes. Mr. James Dodson suggested that items on the agenda that are significant be marked as such on the agenda. Additionally, all other actions not categorized in the rules will go through the consensus process. If consensus cannot be reached, the action will be elevated to the significant category. These revisions were approved by the group and a draft of the revised rules will be circulated for review by email. Members will vote on a final copy of the rules at the next meeting.

### **Briefing of Ongoing GSA BBASC Studies**

#### **1) Texas Instream Flow Study**

- a. Dr. Tim Bonner, Texas State University, and Ed Oborny, Bio-West, gave an update on the project to evaluate the adopted environmental flows standards and BBASC recommendations in the Guadalupe and San

Antonio basins and across other basins using ecological indicators at a variety of streamflow levels. Currently, the team is developing a methodology to validate the standards to ensure they maintain a sound ecological environment. The project analyzes how various flow pulses are affecting aquatic species, riparian tree species, and floodplain connectivity.

- b. For the aquatic species, the study used seven sites in the Guadalupe and San Antonio Basins and a variety of flow tiers from the environmental flow standards and recommendations. The team sampled seasonally at base flow and following flow pulses. The fish species were sampled in four different habitats including riffle, run, pool, and backwater habitats. The team predicted that after a flow pulse occurs, the fluvial species would increase and fish health would also increase. The preliminary analysis of data seems to support the predictions. The team has taken 55 samples so far for this study, including 28 species of fish and 5,969 macroinvertebrates. The team is attempting to develop methodologies from a range of flow tiers that can be applied across different basins.
- c. Mr. Oborny described the floodplain connectivity portion of the study. During the previous study cycle, the group looked at flow requirements for oxbow lakes to connect to the mainstem of the river. This round of funding the group is evaluating which flow tiers are necessary for the health of the oxbow lakes and the fish communities. The current dataset includes 10,000 fish from 7 different sites and more sampling will be done in April-May 2017. The riparian component of the study has two sites in the Guadalupe and San Antonio Basins. Three tiers were established parallel to the river based on elevation and random sampling points were selected from each. At each sampling point, the team collected GIS data, identified tree species and maturity, took diameter at breast height (DBH), and noted the dominant herbaceous structure. While the sample teams were at the site, they mapped the river's edge and later correlated this data with inundation levels. A draft report will be submitted in late summer 2017. The final product of the study will be a validation methodology tool for the groups to use.
- d. Member Mike Mecke asked how the study team is using three different basins in the dataset to develop the methodology. Dr. Bonner responded that the statistical model codes in basin as a treatment effect and the results will likely demonstrate that the data cannot be compiled in that way. Chair Scott asked if data from the instream flow studies with the San Antonio River Authority (SARA) was being used as a source in this analysis. Mr. Oborny said that the two riparian locations were being assessed including previous flow pulse data from long-term datasets, including the data from SARA instream flow studies. Member Charlie Flatten asked how the base flow is established. Mr. Oborny responded that the base flows in the standards were established from 100-year gage records for the sites after the pulses were removed. Then, the BBEST chose

a percentile of the remainder for the base ranges. They also refined the streamflow ranges using habitat studies at many of the sites. Chair Scott asked whether the validation methodology tool will be easy to use for the stakeholders. Mr. Oborny replied that the tool will be used like a checklist to evaluate whether the various tiers meet the sound ecology goal. Dr. Bonner said that the tool will be as comprehensive as possible, but will be limited by the flows that have been sampled. The tool will only indicate whether the study detected an effect for the tiers that were evaluated. Chair Scott would like the tool to be used to evaluate whether standards are effective and can then make future recommendations to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ). Member Jennifer Ellis questioned whether the team evaluated the BBEST recommendation, BBASC recommendations, and the standards. Dr. Bonner replied that most recommendations are the same as the standards, with a few exceptions. But, if a flow occurred that did not make it into the standards, the team would sample for those. Member Mecke asked whether the study or another study was investigating salinity issues. Mr. Oborny and Dr. Bonner responded that the data is limited to the components that are evaluated in the study. Mr. Nolan Raphelt, TWDB, mentioned that Dr. Lindsey Scheef, University of Texas Marine Science Institute, was doing a study in the Bay, but she could not attend the meeting. Chair Scott commented that the BBASC will attempt to take all results received from the studies to evaluate the standards and make recommendations. Member Mecke asked when the recommendations should be prepared and submitted. Chair Scott responded that the stakeholder groups are nearing the ten year mark for a review of the environmental flow standards.

## 2) Sediment Variability and Nutrient Loading into San Antonio Bay Study

- a. Members received a handout from Mike Lee, USGS, with updates on the study progress. Members were encouraged to forward questions to Jade Rutledge, TCEQ, to forward to Mr. Lee.

### **Set Next Meeting Date, Time, and Location**

Chair Scott suggested the next BBASC meeting be held in September 2017. A Doodle Poll will be sent out for availability. Chair Scott hoped the final study reports and results will be available for presentation at the meeting. Alternate Steve Raabe asked whether any of the teams had an extension. Mr. Raphelt stated that the groups would have something to present at that time if an extension occurred, although it may not be finalized. Chair Scott asked how long the extensions typically last. Mr. Raphelt replied that it varies depending on the type of extension. It could be a few weeks for finalizing a report to a year if a team were trying to sample for hydrologic conditions. Chair Scott asked if the GBRA location is suitable for the next meeting. Members agreed that the location is convenient.

### **Agenda Items**

The next meeting will include reports from the science teams and an approval of the revised meeting rules. Vice-Chair Wassenich asked whether there are any unfilled vacancies on the BBASC. Ms. Rutledge replied that she had not received any new resignations from members. Chair Scott stated that if another resignation occurred before the next meeting, Ms. Rutledge would announce a nomination request via email. Member Courtney requested that an informal orientation for new members be scheduled before the next meeting. Chair Scott mentioned that she would set up an orientation like that for new BBASC members or members that needed a refresher on the BBASC. Member Jace Tunnell asked how members designate an alternate. Ms. Rutledge will send an email to all members without a designated alternate to appoint one.

Mr. Raphelt requested that the BBASC gather a list of reviewers and their contact information for the draft reports to provide to TWDB. Chair Scott asked for volunteers to review the draft reports. Member Scott Courtney, Vice-Chair Dianne Wassenich, and Alternate Annie Kellough expressed interest in reviewing the draft reports. BBEST Member Greg Eckhardt is another likely reviewer. Member Tommy Hill also asked whether there was potential funding for additional environmental flow studies in the future. Mr. Raphelt stated that TWDB requested 2 million dollars in funding divided into two 1 million dollar requests.

Vice-Chair Wassenich requested that an item be added to the future agenda reevaluating the membership of James Lee Murphy. He continues as a representative of the River Authorities though he is no longer representing that stakeholder group through employment. Member Doris Cooksey also requested a presentation on the potential listing of Texas mussel species as threatened or endangered. Member Colin McDonald offered to give a presentation based on his work on this for the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts. Member David Mauk requested that a presentation on Medina Lake occur at a future meeting.

### **Public Comment**

Ms. Rutledge gave an update on the Environmental Flows Advisory Group (EFAG). Senator Creighton and Senator Kolkhorst are two new members appointed to the EFAG. There is not an EFAG meeting scheduled at this time. Ms. Rutledge also stated that the meeting materials would be accessible on the TCEQ website within the week.

### **Adjourn**